

STATE SENATOR • MARK SCHAUER • 19TH DISTRICT

Schauer Press Release



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Schauer, Granholm Announce \$18.5 Million in MDOT Grants To Increase Safety and Access to MIS *NASCAR Star Ryan Newman Also Honored at Capitol Ceremony*

LANSING--State Senator Mark Schauer (D-Battle Creek) today joined Governor Jennifer M. Granholm and Kirk Steudle, Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Director, to announce \$18.5 million in grants to improve safety and access to Michigan International Speedway (MIS).

“Improvements to US-127 and US-12 have been a top priority for my district for some time,” said Schauer. “Governor Granholm’s action will enhance safety and ensure that MIS continues to thrive and help create jobs.”

The grants include \$7.5 million in accelerated projects. Construction will begin as early as fall 2006 on projects along US-127 and US-12. Funding will come from a combination of federal and state dollars, including safety grants and resources allocated for transportation and economic development. The projects are expected to directly create over 60 jobs.

The accelerated projects are expected to be completed in advance of the 2009 race season and will include:

- Widening a section of US-12 west of Gate 8 at MIS to M-50. This section easily clogs during race weekends causing hours of backed-up traffic. Intersection improvements, resurfacing, and shoulder widening are also underway in this portion of road.
- Improving the intersection of US-12 and US-127 to increase safety.
- Widening the shoulders along US-127 to provide an additional race day travel lane.

Schauer has worked closely with the Governor’s office, MDOT, and MIS officials to ensure these projects received funding a timely construction.

MIS has a substantial impact on Michigan’s economy. Prior to the 2005 season, MIS completed the largest capital renovation in its history, supporting the construction industry and its workers in a significant way. Additionally, race weekends bring in tourists from all 50 states and about 13 foreign countries; approximately half of MIS ticket holders come from out-of-state. Most importantly, up to 6,000 workers are employed during race weekends with almost 100 permanent local jobs.

In addition to today's road projects announcement, Schauer honored NASCAR star Ryan Newman at the Capitol with a resolution declaring June 6, 2006, Ryan Newman Day. In early June of last year Newman set the NEXTEL Cup qualifying record at the Michigan International Speedway in Jackson.

"We appreciate this recognition of Michigan International Speedway, NASCAR, and Ryan Newman, especially as it relates to our position in the backyard of the auto industry," said Brett Shelton, president of MIS. "MIS has grown substantially over the past few years in large part due to economic development initiatives championed by Sen. Schauer and his colleagues."

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Mark Schauer is the Senate Democratic Floor Leader. He represents the 19th Senate District, which includes all of Calhoun County and most of Jackson County.